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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 001968

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, AF/SPG, SE NATSIOS, NSC FOR  
PITTMAN AND HUDSON

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TAGS: [KPKO](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: JANJAWID WARLORD: WE WANT AMERICA AS OUR PATRON  
AGAINST KHARTOUM

REF: A. KHARTOUM 1907

[B](#). KHARTOUM 1886

[C](#). KHARTOUM 1567

[D](#). KHARTOUM 1548

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. Summary: Alleged Janjawid turncoat Juma Dagalo claims that his well-armed movement is sincerely opposed to Khartoum, despite sketchy evidence to the contrary, and has forged new ties with mostly African Darfur rebel groups. He seeks American moral and political support for a confrontation with his former masters. End summary.

REBEL MOVEMENT OR TROJAN HORSE?  
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[1](#)2. (C) CDA Fernandez met Mahariyya tribal leader Juma Dagalo on December 11 at UN HQ in Nyala along with UN head of Office Ali Hassan. Dagalo, once a feared janjawid commander with ties to the Sudanese Border Intelligence Force (BIF) is now one of the principal moving forces behind the nascent Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), a new, heavily armed Arab militia made up of several thousand Mahariyya (led by Dagalo's 34-year old nephew Muhammad Hamdan, known as "Hamati") which allegedly either have, or intend to, switch sides and fight the Sudanese Government. CDA met Dagalo with SE Natsios in late September (reftel d) and later with Dagalo's son (reftel c). These Mahariyya have spent much of 2007 in a nasty blood feud against another pro-government tribe, the Terjem, with hundreds of dead (most of them Terjem) in the worst and most sustained violence in Darfur all year.

[1](#)3. (C) According to the UN's Hassan, Hamati invited himself to a recent meeting of Darfur rebel movements returned from Juba. The rebels doubted that the SRF was a legitimate rebel movement, believing that they still may be tied to Khartoum (probably through NISS - Sudanese Intelligence). Despite their misgivings the rebel movements were ready to accept the SRF once they see them actually launch a credible and verifiable attack against SAF (Sudanese Armed Forces) garrisons. They based their doubts on reports of a Sudanese air attack on the SRF which resulted in no casualties or damage (one person was supposedly killed in a traffic accident during the "attack") and the fact that, unlike other rebels' relatives, Mahariyya families and dependents have not been harassed by the Sudanese Government. Dagalo himself seems to come and go into GOS-held Nyala with impunity.

[1](#)4. (C) The SRF controls a swath of territory from Eastern Jebel Marra towards Sarman Jabo, 40 km north of Nyala. Their headquarters appears to be Umm al-Qura, a former Border Guard base. It is from the lower slopes of Jebel Marra that the

SRF has reportedly made contact with officers of SLM-Abdul Wahid, signing a non-aggression pact between the mostly Fur rebels and their erstwhile persecutors. Hassan described the SRF that he saw as very well armed with personal weapons (AKs, sniper rifles, MGs, rocket launchers) and having land cruisers equipped with heavy machine guns, anti-tank guns, MRL (multiple rocket launchers) and some truck mounted artillery. They were not only equipped with the usual Thuraya phones but with hand-held radios not seen before with other rebel groups operating in Darfur. Hassan described them as apparently "well disciplined, well organized" and mentioned reports of rising tensions between them and their Baggara (cattle herding) Rizeigat brethren in South Darfur (tensions Dagalo and Hamati both dismissed).

15. (C) Dagalo discounted the suspicion that the SRF were not "true" rebels. He said that Darfuri Arabs were oppressed by Khartoum, had been cheated and lied to, deprived of a future - he himself was illiterate, as were most Rizeigat. He recited a long series of complaints about Khartoum: non-payment of compensation for fallen members, no salaries for several months, unfulfilled promises of development in education, health, water and veterinary services. "Khartoum gets wealthy while we suffer," he noted. He recalled CDA's comments in a past meeting that Darfuri Arabs were being used by Khartoum to do their dirty work and were in danger of being made the scapegoats for the NCP's many crimes in the region. Dagalo said that even the notorious Musa Hilal was thinking of switching sides although he judged Hilal as "still leaning slightly towards Khartoum."

ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS - SO SAYS THE UN  
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KHARTOUM 00001968 002 OF 002

16. (C) The warlord added that his people were already breaking with the Sudanese Government, a reality that had sent shockwaves through the regime. The Abbala (camel herding) Rizeigat (of which the Mahariyya are a sub-section) were strong, great fighters and stronger than the Sudanese Army in Darfur. But they wanted allies in the international community that would understand their objectives, and America was the strongest power in the world. They sought American support, "not weapons. which we already have, but political, diplomatic and logistical support." He described American support for Israel, which allowed that small nation to "defy the world." He asked CDA, "as Bush's representative in Sudan," are you with us if we rise against Khartoum?

17. (C) CDA responded that America neither supported the Khartoum regime nor was actively seeking to overthrow it. "We deal with whateve2QAaQ many problems with them. Dagalo responded that they were indeed the reality in Darfur. Ali Hassan interjected that everyone would doubt that "new reality," as the Darfur rebels from Juba had noted, until the SRF actually fought the SAF openly, "perhaps taking one of the key towns in the region." CDA continued that we were sympathetic to the oppressed of Darfur (Dagalo described his people as "mustada'feen," the Quranic term for the oppressed) and saw the Arab tribes as victims of Khartoum's deadly games but our preference is always for peace and true reconciliation. He noted how the Misseriya of South Kordofan, who had bled for the government "in holy war against the South" had been abandoned to the extent that many of them were signing up with the SPLA, their former opponents.

18. (C) Dagalo said that the Darfuri Arabs' options seemed to be the "Misseriyya" treatment by Khartoum or the "Mini Minawi option" of empty favors for a few leaders while the rest suffer. CDA agreed that Minawi seemed to be "in a golden cage" while his people are squeezed on the ground. Dagalo asked "would you trust Khartoum if they tried to make a deal, what would you do?" CDA admitted that no one should trust the NCP, but only what one can actually see or verify. As to

what the Arab tribes should do, CDA suggested that they find ways to reconcile with the African tribes like the Fur and Zaghawa, reach out to rebels to explain their goals, and find strength in unity by avoiding the old Khartoum game of divide and rule. Dagalo agreed that the military prowess of the Rizeigat needed to be matched by political acumen. "We can fight but actually we are simple men and feel that Khartoum is always tricking us." He invited CDA to spend some days with the tribe next time he comes to South Darfur, "you might see some things of interest to you if you do." CDA said he would try to visit sometime in January, if possible.

19. Comment: Subtle agent provocateur or ruthless, sincere rube (but probably a mixture of both) with his own private army, Dagalo and the SRF represent the changing, fragmenting reality of Darfur with former enemies and allies switching sides, a brutal but relatively weak regime constantly intriguing, and an often befuddled and ill-prepared international community trying to keep up. There is plenty of smoke so far but not much fire to the "Janjawid switching sides" story. We believe that there is something to it, there is too much anecdotal evidence, but are not fully convinced yet about how widespread of a phenomenon it is. Janjawid (the Maaliya tribe militia) fought successfully for Khartoum in the battle for Haskanita/Al-Muhajeriyya only a month ago. And there is a very convenient element in this for Khartoum, that if they do not control these units, they then have plausible deniability should they attack UNAMID or AMIS or invade an IDP camp (the fighting in Al-Muhajeriyya, which involved the SAF and Maaliyya against SLM-Minawi was described by the GOS as "fighting between tribes"). But with this kaleidoscope of interests and resentment, anything is possible today in Darfur: the regime could largely lose control (especially if it cannot pay its allies) in the region or it could successfully weather this storm by manipulating the players as they have done for so long. End comment.  
FERNANDEZ